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ABSTRACT

A study was done of the destinations of secondary school dropouts in 1990 in the Northern Territory of Australia, focusing on aspects of the school-to-work transition. The study contacted students through mailed surveys and telephone interviews. Information on dropouts not contacted through these methods was gained from the Northern Territory Department of Education's Employment and Training Branch. Particular difficulty was encountered in obtaining information on rural aboriginal school leavers so that consequently the study focused primary on urban students. During the 1990 school year, 1,813 15-year-old students left the urban schools. Of those, 47.4 percent left to go to work, 35 percent left for further study of some kind, and 17.6 percent went to other destinations. Of the dropouts who went on to work most took jobs as clerks, salespersons, and personal service workers. A substantial number also entered apprenticeship programs. When former students were asked about their reasons for leaving school, dissatisfaction with school itself was the second largest single reason after the first reason: leaving the geographic area. Results of the questionnaire also found that 60 percent of participants intended to further their education in the future. Included are 20 tables and 9 figures. An appendix gives a classification if occupational groups used in the study. (JB)

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Where Did They Go?

Report 1/1992

NORTHERN TERRITORY

1990

SCHOOL LEAVER

DESTINATIONS

Northern Territory Department of Education
Darwin 1992

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AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study were to:

- identify all Northern Territory students in Years 10, 11 and 12, of school-leaving age, who left school and did not return to the NT secondary school system
- determine, through questionnaires, interviews or through other agencies, the destinations of as many of the above group as was practically possible
- identify and record the reasons some of these school leavers chose to leave school rather than complete their studies to the end of Year 12
- identify and record the destinations the school leavers entered and the reasons they had for entering each destination
- ascertain how many of those who decided to leave school prior to the completion of Year 12 now regretted that decision and how many of these intended to pursue any form of post-compulsory education
- describe the patterns of gender distribution in the destinations entered by the school leavers
- identify how many school leavers with a Tertiary Entrance Score (TES) that would qualify them for entrance to a tertiary institution did not choose to enter a tertiary institution and how many of these were accepted at a tertiary institution but deferred their entry
- produce a report to help guide government policy in relation to education, training and employment and to allow comparison with similar studies conducted in the Northern Territory and other states.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the 1990 school year, 1813 students of school-leaving age (15 years) permanently left the NT urban secondary school system, and entered a range of destinations. It was this study's purpose to describe aspects of the school-to-work transition such as why students left school, which destinations they entered, why they entered these destinations, how those who elected to leave prior to the completion of Year 12 now felt about that decision and how many school leavers achieved a TES but did not enter a tertiary institution or deferred entry. The report is intended to assist government and other bodies in the development of policies related to education, employment and training.

With the unique structure of the Northern Territory economy and work force, this study will allow comparison with trends in other Australian States and Territories and indicate how differences might impact on education, training and employment in the NT. Comparisons may also be made with earlier and future school-leaver studies conducted in the Northern Territory.

METHODOLOGY

- **Background**

  Owing to the personal responses required in some areas of this study (such as why a person chose to leave school and why school leavers entered certain areas), it was desirable to personally contact as many of the 1989 school leavers as possible. The preferred method of contact was by mail with all respondents being given the chance to win a prize for returning their questionnaire. Within the limited time available following the return of the mail questionnaires, some telephone calls were made to conduct personal interviews. For the school leavers who could not be contacted by mail or telephone, a significant number of destinations were supplied by the Education Department's Employment and Training Branch, the Northern Territory University (NTU) and school records (see Table 1).

  For the purposes of this study, a school leaver was defined as a person of school-leaving age (15 years) who had officially left i.e. notified the school of his or her intention to leave the NT secondary school system and had not returned to that system. A significant number of students had, in 1989, indicated their intention to return to school in 1990, but failed to take their place in 1990 without officially notifying the school. These were deemed to be 1989 school leavers as their last day of school was in 1989.

- **Information Sources**

  Information was gathered from the following sources:

  <u>CBASS Schools</u>

  From the Department of Education's CBASS (Computer Based Administrative System for Schools) network the following information was derived for each 1990 school leaver

  - name
  - date of birth
  - gender
  - date of leaving school
  - year level at leaving school
  - postal address
  - telephone number
  - destination (only stated in a small percentage of cases).

  The schools in this network which were able to supply the above information were as follows:

Alice Springs High School
Casuarina Secondary College
Dripstone High School
Jabiru Area School
Nhulunbuy High School
Sadadeen High School
Taminmin High School
Batchelor Area School
Anzac Hill High School
Darwin High School
Driver High School
Katherine High School
Nightcliff High School
Sanderson High School
Tennant Creek High School

Non-CBASS Urban Schools

These were predominantly the non-government schools which were not in the Education Department's CBASS network. Each of these schools was contacted and asked to provide a list of its school leavers with as many of the details available on CBASS as possible.

O'Loughlin Catholic College
Marrara Christian School
St Philip's College, Alice Springs
NT Secondary Correspondence School
St John's College
Catholic High School, Alice Springs
Batchelor Area School

Rural Aboriginal School Leavers

As mentioned in the 1989 report, some difficulties were experienced in collecting school-leaver information from Aboriginal schools and communities. Notwithstanding the large amount of effort and time devoted to collecting information regarding 1989 leavers from Aboriginal schools and communities, only a relatively incomplete picture could be drawn; a picture that had to be supplemented with Australian Bureau of Statistics information to give some indication of the destinations of rural Aboriginal school leavers.

To be able to adequately describe the paths of rural Aboriginal school leavers, given the problems of a Darwin-based researcher identifying and communicating with the school leavers, it was felt that personal interviews with the school leavers themselves or their family members, teachers and community members would have been necessary. As this would have constituted a full-time survey in itself, the single researcher was not able to pursue this avenue of investigation as well as complete the urban school leavers report within the allotted period.

- **Mail Questionnaires**

Mail questionnaires were used as the first phase of the information-gathering exercise. In an effort to combat the usual small response rate to mail questionnaires, potential respondents were offered an incentive to complete and return their questionnaire over and above the appeal to assist in educational research. Each school leaver who returned a completed questionnaire became eligible to win one of sixty prizes on offer. This took the form of an authorised lottery in which sixty completed questionnaires were drawn from a barrel to each win a free prize for the respondent. Just Jeans Pty Ltd and the NT Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission

offered sponsorship in the form of heavily discounted clothing and 'Territorian' lottery tickets respectively.

- **Telephone Questionnaires**

  In the limited time available following the processing of all returned mail questionnaires, a number of telephone interviews were conducted. Where the school leaver was not available, a family member was asked to supply the information. Without exception people were cooperative in supplying the information required.

- **Other Methods of Gaining School-Leaver Information**

  Where mail questionnaires and telephone interviews failed to establish contact, other sources were available for determining school-leaver destinations such as: CBASS records (these were especially helpful in ascertaining whether leavers had gone interstate); the Department of Education's Employment and Training Branch was able to supply lists of scholarship holders, apprentices, trainees, pre-vocational and Workstart course entrants and school leavers who joined the NT Public Service. Using information supplied by the Northern Territory University (NTU), the further and higher education destinations of a significant number of school leavers (from Year 12 only) were determined (see following table).

TABLE 1 SOURCES OF INFORMATION REGARDING 1990 NT SCHOOL LEAVERS

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS	%
Mail questionnaires	487	49
Telephone interviews	72	7
NTU records	154	15
School records	68	7
Employment and Training records	224	22
TOTAL	1005	100

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Locating the 1990 School Leavers**
  As with the 1989 study, locating the 1990 school leavers proved to be a problem. Of the 1745 questionnaires sent (CBASS records had revealed the destinations of 68 school leavers, the majority of these had gone interstate), 487 (28%) were returned completed.

  Also returned were 14 questionnaires considered unsuitable owing to incompleteness and 114 'return to sender' letters. Given the transient nature of the NT's population, it would also appear reasonable to assume that a number of the 1990 school leavers did not respond to the study as they had left the NT. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures tend to support this assumption.

TABLE 2 AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS FIGURES FOR PERMANENT INTERSTATE DEPARTURES BY LONG-TERM NT RESIDENTS

Interstate departures 1990

March quarter	5759
June quarter	4233
September quarter	4496
December quarter	3615
Total	**18103**

Information gathering did not commence until late in June 1991. If the as-yet unpublished March and June quarter figures for 1991 were included, it becomes clear that a sizeable proportion of the NT's urban school leavers could have left the NT prior to the commencement of the study. It may be worth noting that the Australian Bureau of Statistics regards the rural Aboriginal population as being relatively stable in relation to overall mobility.

Care should be taken when making comparisons between the occupational, further educational and 'other' categories into which the school leavers fell, as this is not a purely random sample. As organisations such as the Education Department's Employment and Training Branch and the NTU were able to supply the names and destinations of all school leavers who entered areas under their administration, groups such as apprentices, trainees, NTU higher and further education students and others may be proportionally over-represented. Conversely, the completeness of data on school leavers entering these areas greatly increases the validity of the absolute figures.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1990 URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS

- **Number of Leavers**

  According to all figures received, during or at the end of the 1990 school year 1813 students left from the NT's urban schools. These were students in Years 10, 11 and 12 of school-leaving age (15 years) who notified the school of their intention to leave and did not return to the secondary school system in the NT at least up to the time the survey was conducted.

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF 1990 LEAVERS FROM DARWIN SCHOOLS (by school & gender)

GEN	CA	DR	NC	DV	OL	MC	SJ	DH	TN	SN	TOT
M	283	16	30	27	0	13	67	126	29	17	608
F	296	27	16	41	0	23	83	142	32	16	676
TOT	579	43	46	68	0	36	150	268	61	33	1284

Casuarina	CA	O'Loughlin College	OL	Darwin	DH
Dripstone	DR	Marrara Christian	MC	Taminmin	TN
Nightcliff	NC	St John's College	SJ	Sanderson	SN
Driver	DV				

Casuarina Secondary College, Darwin's only senior college, again supplied by far the largest number of school leavers.

TABLE 4 NUMBER OF 1990 LEAVERS FROM OTHER URBAN SCHOOLS (by school & gender)

GEN	AS	AZ	JA	SD	TC	SP	NT	CH	NH	BA	KA	TOT
M	26	9	9	119	10	0	9	4	31	4	37	258
F	24	15	5	134	12	0	12	0	29	4	36	271
TOT	50	24	14	253	22	0	21	4	60	8	73	529

Alice Springs	AS	Tennant Creek	TC	Nhulunbuy	NH
Anzac	AZ	St Philip's (Alice)	SP	Batchelor	BA
Jabiru	JA	NT Correspondence	NT	Katherine	KA
Sadadeen	SD	Catholic High (Alice)	CH		

Alyangula Area School reported no school leavers. Of the other urban schools, Sadadeen Secondary College, Alice Spring's only senior Secondary college, supplied the most school leavers.

In all, 1813 students left the NT's urban schools in 1990; 866 (47.8%) were male and 947 (52.2%) female.

- **Months in which 1990 Urban Students Left School**

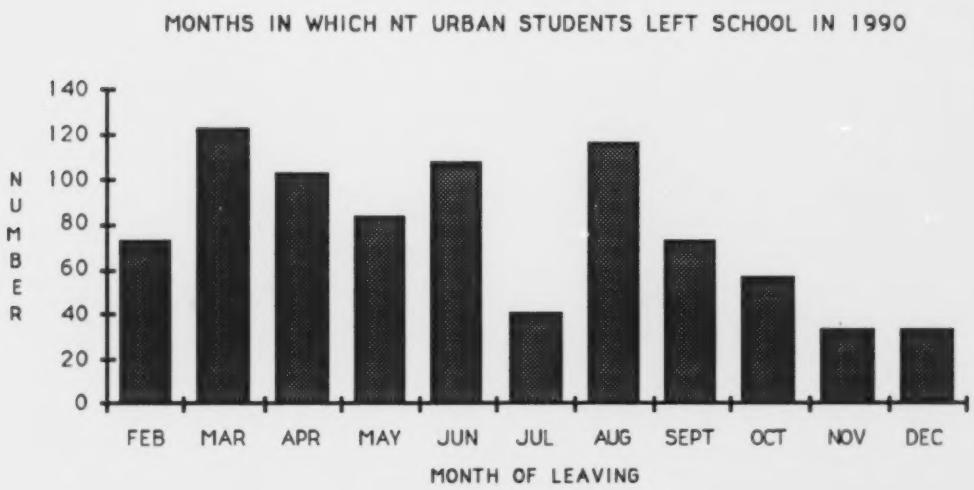
The following figures apply only to the majority of school leavers whose dates of leaving were supplied.

TABLE 5 MONTHS IN WHICH 1990 NT STUDENTS LEFT URBAN SCHOOLS

FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC*	TOT
71	121	101	82	106	40	115	71	55	32	32	826

*December's figures include only those students who left during the month of December before the end of the school year (December 14).

FIGURE 1



As in 1989, no real pattern emerged in the months of leaving until towards the end of the school year, when the number of leavers began to decline. Fewer students left during the months of November and December prior to the end of the school year. Again, it would seem that if students remained at school till the end of the third term, they were much less likely to leave before the end of the school year.

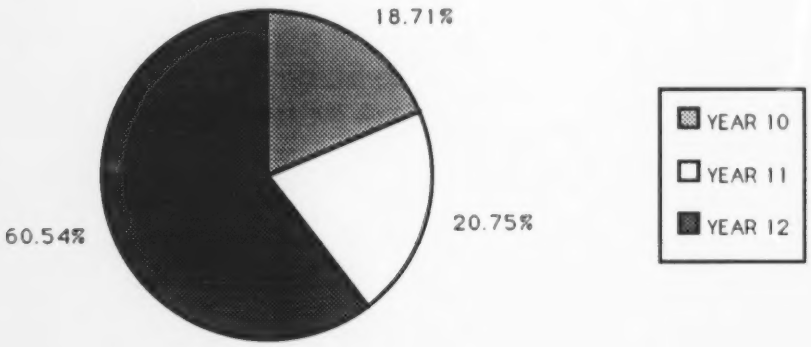
Of those urban school leavers whose date of leaving was supplied, 981 (54%) completed the school year, 826 (46%) left school during the year.

- **Year Levels at Leaving**

The majority of the NT's 1990 school leavers had achieved the level of Year 12 on leaving. However, large numbers left during Years 10 and 11.

FIGURE 2

YEAR LEVELS OF NT URBAN STUDENTS ON LEAVING SCHOOL IN 1990



A greater proportion of the 1990 school leavers left in Year 12 than in 1989 when 52.89% left in Year 12. The proportion leaving in Years 10 and 11 was lower than in 1989, especially in Year 11 where 22.72% left in 1989.

TABLE 6 YEAR 10, 11 AND 12 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS DURING OR AT THE END OF THE 1990 SCHOOL YEAR

YEAR	DURING YEAR	%	END OF YEAR	%	TOT
10	233	69	105	31	338
11	332	89	43	11	375
12	261	24	833	76	1094
TOT	826	46	981	54	1807

Students in Years 10 and 11 were much more likely to leave during the school year rather than at the end. Year 11 students were the most likely to leave during the school year. On reaching Year 12, students were much more likely to continue to the end of the school year. There were no significant differences between the proportions

of male and female students who left during or at the end of Year 12, unlike in 1989 when a higher proportion of females completed Year 12.

School Leavers Completing Year 12

Of those students who commenced Year 12 in 1990 a large majority went on to complete that year of study.

TABLE 7 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS DURING AND AT THE END OF YEAR 12 (by gender)

GEN	DURING YEAR 12	%	END OF YEAR 12	%	TOT
M	114	24	366	76	480
F	147	24	467	76	614
TOT	261	24	833	76	1094

Proportionally the same percentages of males and females completed Year 12, as opposed to 1989 when a marginally higher percentage of female students completed Year 12. Numerically, 101 more females than males completed that year of study.

Of all the 1990 school leavers, 44% left after having completed Year 12, which is considerably more than the 37% who completed Year 12 in 1989. A greater proportion of 1990 Year 12 students (76%) stayed on until the end of the school year than in 1989 (71%).

Many students who were expected to return to school and therefore appeared on the CBASS records for the 1990 school year, did not take their place at school in that year. Students in this category were those whose 'left date', according to CBASS, was on or about the first day of the 1990 school year.

Using all of the previously mentioned methods to determine the destinations of the 1990 school leavers, the research officer was able to describe the destinations of 1023 school leavers which was 56.4% of the total school leaver population.

REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

During 1990, 974 students left school prior to completing Year 12. Except for those students who completed Year 12 and therefore left because they had completed their secondary schooling (see Table 7), all school leavers who were interviewed were asked why they had left school rather than continuing to the completion of Year 12. Although the interviewees were able to give more than one reason if they so wished, most gave one reason only or gave reasons that generally fell into the same category. For this reason, one response was recorded in each case. In the few instances where responses fell across two or more categories, the response category into which the number one reason for leaving fell, was recorded.

CATEGORY	POSSIBLE RESPONSE(S)	CODE
Financial	My parents couldn't afford to keep me at school. I wanted to earn some money.	A
School progress	I didn't think I was good enough to keep studying. My results were not good enough.	B
Dissatisfaction with school	I was sick of and bored by school generally. I was asked to leave by the principal.	C
Employment	I had a job to go to.	D
Apprenticeship/ Traineeship/ Course	To take up an apprenticeship/traineeship/course that became available.	E
Left the NT	Left the NT to go interstate or overseas.	F
Boarding school or secondary studies i/state*	Left the NT to continue secondary school studies either at a boarding school or a secondary school.	G
Other**	Reasons other than above (see explanation below).	H

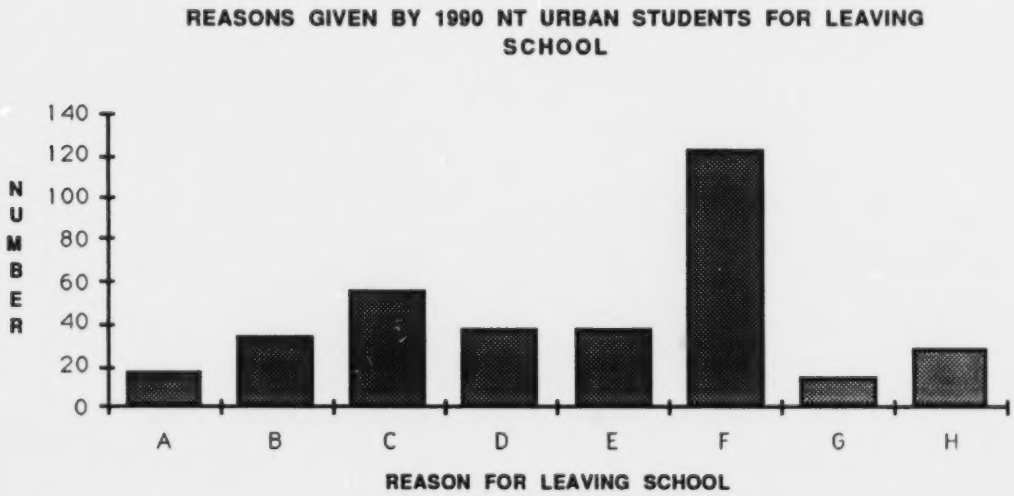
*Category G refers to those students who still consider themselves NT residents.
**In the OTHER category above a variety of reasons were offered such as illness, pregnancy, dissatisfaction with courses on offer, death, friends left, extended holiday and others.

TABLE 8 REASONS GIVEN BY 1990 NT URBAN STUDENTS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

REASON FOR LEAVING CATEGORY	TOT	%
A: Financial	17	5
B: School progress	34	10
C: Dissatisfaction with school	55	16
D: Employment	38	11
E: Apprenticeship/Traineeship/Course	37	11
F: Left the NT	123	35
G: Boarding/secondary school interstate	14	4
H: Other	29	8
TOTAL	**347**	**100**

Category F may be an underestimation of some magnitude as the reason a number of the 1990 school leavers could not be contacted was probably that they had left the NT (see Table 2). Those who completed Year 12 were not asked to supply a reason for leaving.

FIGURE 3



Few gender differences were apparent in the 1990 school leavers' reasons for leaving school. A much lower proportion of the 1990 school leavers gave reason E for leaving school than their 1989 counterparts. Leaving the NT and dissatisfaction with school maintained their relative importance as reasons for leaving school.

Although not quantified, a number of respondents to the 1989 survey expressed regret at having left school rather than continuing with their secondary education. As a result it was decided to include a question in the 1990 survey asking those 'premature' (those who did not complete Year 12) school leavers whether they now wished that they had stayed at school longer. In the same section of the questionnaire, those 'premature' school leavers were asked whether they intended to resume any further education at a later date.

TABLE 9 FEELINGS EXPRESSED BY 'PREMATURE' 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS REGARDING LEAVING SCHOOL (by Year Level)

Do you now wish that you had stayed at school longer?

YEAR	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
10	16	34	31	66	47
11	28	42	39	58	67
12*	24	37	41	63	65
TOTAL	68	38	111	62	179

*Those who left prior to the completion of Year 12

Of those school leavers who responded to this section of the questionnaire, a considerable proportion wished that they had stayed at school longer. This was after being out of school for only a relatively short time. Although not quantified in the 1989 school leavers study, a number of the 'premature' school leavers stated that even though they had finished school, they still had intentions of resuming some form of education in the future. 'Premature' school leavers were asked whether or not they intended resuming some form of education in the future.

TABLE 10 FUTURE EDUCATIONAL INTENTIONS OF 1990 NT URBAN 'PREMATURE' SCHOOL LEAVERS (by year level)

Do you intend resuming some form of education?

YEAR	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
10	30	62.5	18	37.5	48
11	40	59	28	41	68
12	40	59	28	41	68
TOTAL	110	60	74	40	184

Clearly the majority of 'premature' school leavers felt that the end of their term as a secondary school student did not necessarily mean the end of their formal education. This applied most to the earliest of school leavers who responded to this question, i.e. from Year 10.

OVERALL DESTINATIONS OF 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS

For ease of analysis the wide range of destinations reported was divided into three groups:

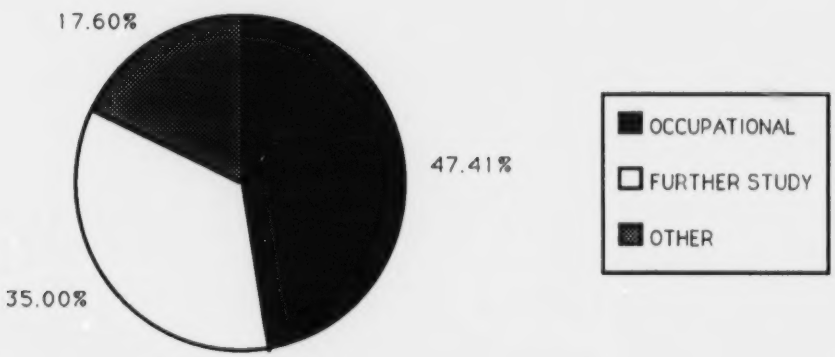
- **Occupational destinations:** These were occupationally oriented destinations including employment, unemployment (but part of the labour pool), apprenticeships, traineeships and pre-vocational and Workstart courses. There were 485 school leavers in this group

- **Further study:** This group included higher education (universities and colleges of advanced education) and technical and further education. There were 358 school leavers in this group

- **Other destinations:** These were the neither occupationally nor educationally oriented destinations which included interstate secondary study, interstate/overseas permanent departures, exchange students and social reasons. There were 180 school leavers in this group

FIGURE 4

MAJOR DESTINATIONS OF 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS



As previously mentioned, the population sample was not a purely random selection. Due to the completeness of school leaver destination data available on some Occupational and Further Study destinations, these two categories could be over-represented at the expense of the Other category. It would appear that the Occupational area was the major destination followed by Further Study, then Other. A more detailed account of each major category follows.

OCCUPATIONAL DESTINATIONS

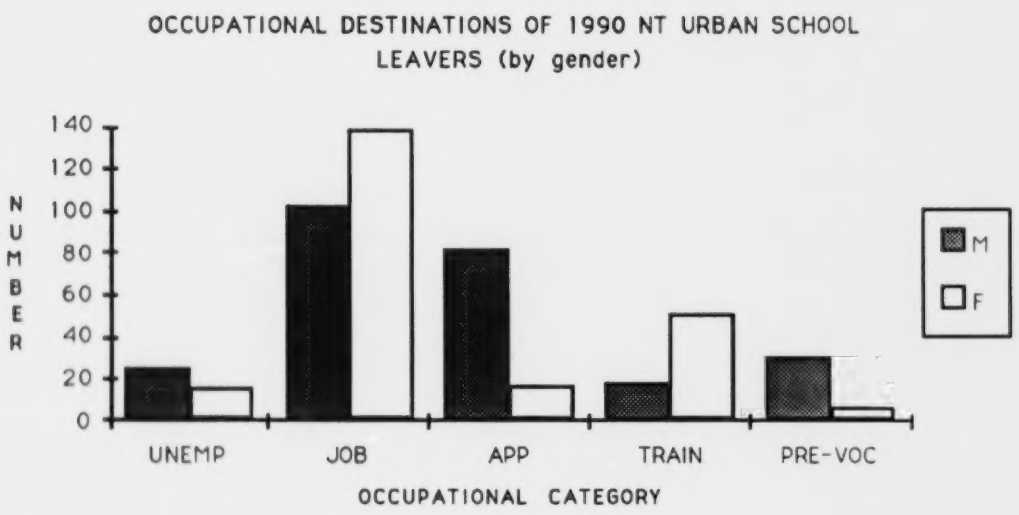
The Occupational destinations of 485 school leavers were ascertained. Of this number, 257 (53%) were males and 228 (47%) were females. The destinations described below were the first destinations the school leavers entered on leaving school.

TABLE 11 OCCUPATIONAL DESTINATIONS OF 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

GEN	UNEMPLOYED	JOB	APPRENTICE	TRAINEE	PRE-VOC AND WORK-START	TOT
M	25	102	81	18	31	257
F	16	138	17	51	6	228
TOT	41	240	98	69	37	485
%	8	50	20	14	8	

Even with the probable proportional over-representation of some of the Occupational categories, the proportion of 1990 school leavers unemployed was higher than in 1989. This perhaps was a reflection of the prevailing economic conditions. Proportionally, similar numbers entered into apprenticeships with slightly lower proportions moving into employment and traineeships than in 1989.

FIGURE 5



The Pre-vocational category in Figure 5 also includes Workstart scheme entrants.

Gender differences, especially in the employment categories involving further formal training, were readily apparent. Once again, apprenticeships and the related Pre-vocational area showed marked gender imbalances.

- **Employment**

  Employment was defined as the job the interviewee saw as his/her major occupation at the time. These occupations were categorised under the Australian Standard Classifications of Occupations (ASCO) as used by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See Appendix 1 for a fuller account of the ASCO classifications.

ASCO CLASSIFICATIONS	CODE
Managers and Administrators	E1
Professionals	E2
Para-professionals	E3
Tradespersons	E4
Clerks	E5
Salespersons and Personal Service Workers	E6
Plant and Machine Operators and Drivers	E7
Labourers and Related Workers	E8

As may have been expected so early in their working lives, none of the school leavers fell into the E1, E2 or E4 classifications as a first destination.

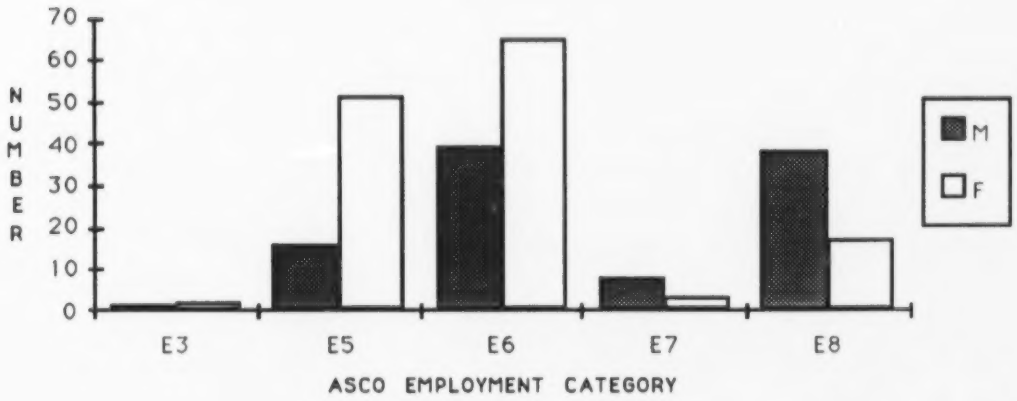
TABLE 12 ASCO EMPLOYMENT GROUPS ENTERED BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

	E3		E5		E6		E7		E8		TOT	
GEN	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
M	1	33	16	24	39	37.5	8	73	38	69	102	42.5
F	2	67	51	76	65	62.5	3	27	17	31	138	57.5
TOT	3	100	67	100	104	100	11	100	55	100	240	100
%	1		28		43		5		23		100	

The highest number of school leavers in the Employment area was in the E6 category, with the second most in the E5 group. The proportions of 1990 school leavers entering each ASCO employment group were similar to 1989 with a slight increase in the E5 category and a slight decrease in the E8 category.

FIGURE 6

ASCO EMPLOYMENT GROUPS ENTERED BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)



The largely service-based private sector and a large public service in the NT were reflected in the occupational destinations entered by many of the 1990 school leavers. Few school leavers reported becoming involved in the manufacturing sector.

Gender imbalances were again evident in the area of employment. This was most noticeable with the larger categories of E5, E6 and E8; particularly E5.

- **Apprenticeships**

With regard to the following figures relating to the number of school leavers entering apprenticeships, traineeships, pre-vocational and Workstart courses, the following qualification should be borne in mind.

The figures used in the report were the latest available from the NT Department of Education's Employment and Training Branch when information was being gathered and added to the data base. These figures indicated that numbers of apprentices and trainees were well down on the figures for the 1989 school leavers. Immediately prior to the printing of the report, the researcher was contacted by an official of the Employment and Training Branch with the information that whilst figures were indeed down on those for 1989, the difference was not as large as it appeared. The reason for this was that in the time since the Employment and Training Branch supplied the original figures, significant numbers of 1990 school leavers had gained apprenticeships or traineeships, although these inclusions still did not bring the numbers to the 1989 school-leaver levels. This decline, although not as large as the national average, was thought to be largely attributable to the economic recession.

The figures originally supplied for entries into pre-vocational courses by 1990 school leavers were greater than those for 1989 school leavers. Workstart figures were also higher than those originally supplied. Once again, significant numbers of school

leavers had entered these courses since the original figures were supplied. This was due to more places being created in the second semester by increases in Commonwealth funding. Due to time constraints the original figures appear in this report, but should be viewed with this qualifier in mind.

Apprenticeships were categorised under the ASCO Apprenticeship classifications.

ASCO CLASSIFICATION	CODE
Metal Fitting and Machining Tradespersons	A1
Other Metal Tradespersons	A2
Electrical and Electronics Tradespersons	A3
Building Tradespersons	A4
Printing Tradespersons	A5
Vehicle Tradespersons	A6
Food Tradespersons	A7
Amenity Horticultural Tradespersons	A8
Miscellaneous Tradespersons	A9

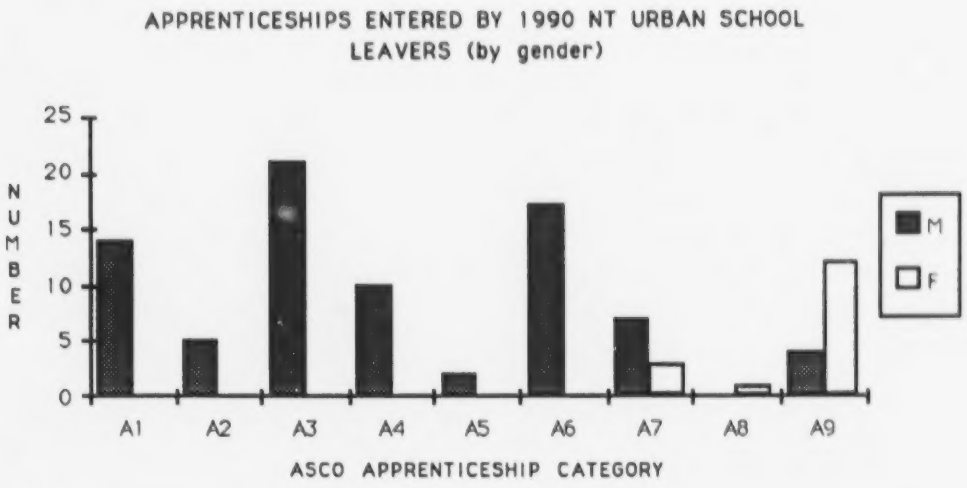
TABLE 13 APPRENTICESHIPS ENTERED BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

GEN	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	TOT
M	14	5	21	10	2	17	7	0	4	80
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	12	16
TOT	14	5	21	10	2	17	10	1	16	96

Two respondents to the questionnaire described themselves as apprentices but did not specify in which area and were not registered with the Employment and Training Branch. They were not included in the above table.

Gender differences were again at their most noticeable in the area of school leavers entering apprenticeships. With the 1990 school leavers, this difference was even more exaggerated. Of the apprentices drawn from 1990 leavers, 83% were male. The corresponding figure for 1989 leavers was 75%.

FIGURE 7



The vast majority of female school leavers who became apprentices entered the A9 category and the vast majority of these were in the field of hairdressing. As can be seen from Figure 7, very few female school leavers entered any of the other fields where apprenticeships were available.

Comprehensive data were available from the Department of Labour and Administrative Services regarding 1989 school leavers entering apprenticeships. The same data regarding 1990 school leavers were available from the Employment and Training Branch of the NT Department of Education. When comparing this data, it would appear that fewer apprenticeships were commenced by 1990 school leavers (96) than by 1989 school leavers (131).

- **Traineeships**

Traineeships are one-year training courses with on- and off-the-job training components. Traineeships are available in the following areas.

TRAINEESHIP CLASSIFICATION	CODE
Australian Public Service, NT Public Service, Office Clerical	T1
Construction Worker	T2
Hospitality	T3
Retail, Automotive Parts	T4
Furniture Removal/Storage, Transport/Freight Industries	T5
Office Technology/Systems Software	T6
Banking	T7
Clothing and Textiles	T8
Insurance	T9
Pastoral	T10

None of the school leavers interviewed reported having entered a T2, T5 or T8 traineeship.

TABLE 14 TRAINEESHIPS ENTERED BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

GEN	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	TOT	%
M	8	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	18	26
F	38	0	4	2	0	2	1	0	4	0	51	74
TOT	46	0	6	5	0	2	2	0	4	4	69	100
%	67	0	8	7	0	3	3	0	6	6	100	

Clerical Traineeships (T1) accounted for 46 (67 %) of all Traineeships entered by the 1990 school leavers, with females dominating numerically in this area, as did females dominate in overall traineeships. As with apprenticeships, comprehensive data were available for all leavers entering traineeships from the 1989 and 1990 school years, and it would appear that the number of trainees from the 1990 leavers (69) was down from the 1989 leavers (111). The collection of data less than one year after most of the traineeships commenced precluded any information being available as to the numbers of trainees who moved into employment in their chosen fields.

- **Pre-vocational and Workstart Courses**

Pre-vocational courses are general one-year courses designed as an introduction to an apprenticeship. The Workstart program involves the three-month full-time placement, in various industries, of young people experiencing difficulties in finding employment. This allows them some work experience and on the job training.

TABLE 15 PRE-VOCATIONAL AND WORKSTART COURSES ENTERED BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

GEN	PRE-VOCATIONAL	WORKSTART
M	27	4
F	2	4
TOT	29	8

- **Unemployed**

The category of Unemployed was applied when the interviewee described his or her situation as having been unemployed, or as currently unemployed but still a part of the work force.

When the number of school leavers unemployed was expressed as a percentage of the number of school leavers in the Occupational category, it showed that 8.5% were unemployed. Even without any allowance being made for the over-representation of

some other groups in this category (such as apprentices and trainees), the number of unemployed school leavers exceeds the six per cent of 1989 school leavers who were unemployed after leaving school. With rising unemployment rates in the general community, this may have been expected. At the time of answering the questionnaire or being interviewed, 23 of the school leavers had not found any form of employment since leaving school.

FURTHER STUDY

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education was further broken down into:

- University Courses: those who were studying full-time at a university (whether the student was studying in the NT or interstate was also recorded)
- Other full-time Higher Education Courses such as diplomas (which were mainly courses conducted by the NTU and interstate colleges of advanced education).
- **University Courses**

  The following are the codes used for university courses throughout Australia.

BACHELOR OF	CODE	BACHELOR OF	CODE
Agriculture/Forestry	BAG	Law	BLA
Architecture	BAC	Medicine (and related)	BME
Arts	BAR	Science	BSC
Dentistry	BDE	Veterinary Science	BVS
Economics/Business/Comm	BCE	Computer Science	BCS
Education	BED	Psychology	BPS
Engineering	BEN	Hospitality Management	BHM
Not Stated	BNS		

FIGURE 8

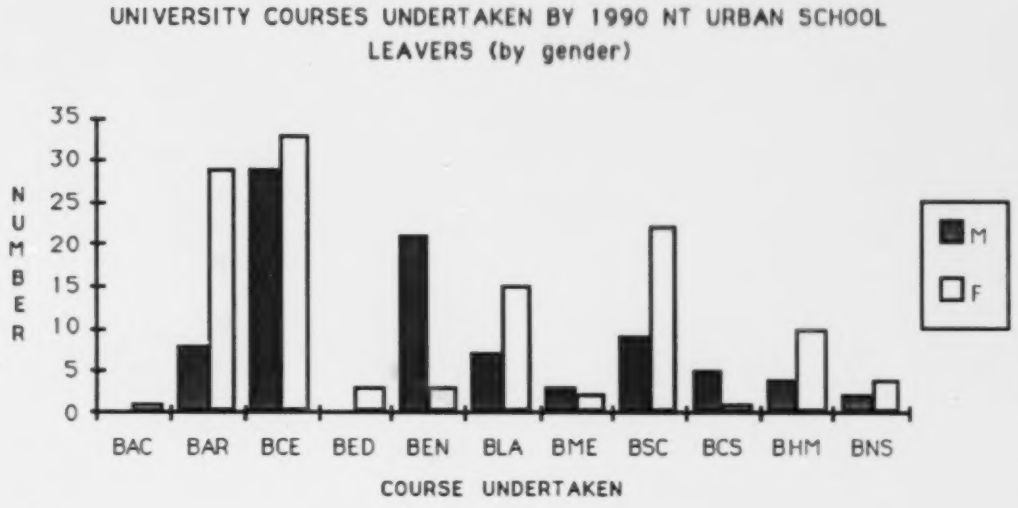


TABLE 16 UNIVERSITY COURSES UNDERTAKEN BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender and place of study)

	PLACE		TOTAL	GENDER		TOTAL
DEGREE	NT	OTHER		M	F	
BAC	0	1	1	0	1	1
BAR	29	8	37	8	29	37
BDE	0	0	0	0	0	0
BPS	0	0	0	0	0	0
BCE	50	12	62	29	33	62
BED	1	2	3	0	3	3
BEN	12	12	24	21	3	24
BLA	22	0	22	7	15	22
BME	0	5	5	3	2	5
BSC	22	9	31	9	22	31
BVS	0	0	0	0	0	0
BCS	5	1	6	5	1	6
BHM	12	2	14	4	10	14
BNS	0	6	6	2	4	6
TOTAL	153	58	211	88	123	211
%	73	27	100	42	58	100

Once again the Business, Commerce and Economics degree category was the most popular with school leavers, especially the Bachelor of Business degree at the NTU. University courses in Arts, Engineering and then Law were the next most popular in that order. Even when the methods of collecting the school leavers' destinations are taken into account, the majority of school leavers preferred to attend university in the NT rather than go interstate.

None of the 1990 school leavers reported having undertaken degrees in Dentistry, Psychology or Veterinary Science. There was a substantial increase in the number doing the BHM degree from the three school leavers who commenced this degree in 1989.

Some marked differences in gender participation patterns from the 1989 school leavers were apparent. When overall participation patterns are looked at, more females (58%) than males (42%) commenced university courses than in 1989. In 1989 the gender breakdown of school leavers entering university was 44% female and 56% male. This predominance of females in university entrances in 1990 is more consistent with the larger number of females than males who completed Year 12 in 1990 (see Table 7).

Within most degree course groups there were differences in gender participation rates. Some of these differences, in areas such as BAR, BED, BEN, BLA, BSC, BCS,

and BHM, exceeded 50%. Numerically speaking, the only major group that came close to equality was the BCE group.

Other Higher Education Courses

These were other non-degree higher education courses such as diplomas. The following are the course codes used.

FIELD OF STUDY	CODE	FIELD OF STUDY	CODE
Applied Science	HAS	Social Science/Humanities	HSS
Visual/Performing Arts	HVP	Health Sciences	HHS
Architecture/Building	HAC	Education	HED
Commerce/Business	HCB		

TABLE 17 OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES UNDERTAKEN BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

	HAS	HVP	HAC	HCB	HSS	HHS	HED	TOTAL
M	2	0	3	0	0	0	3	8
F	1	0	0	0	0	5	20	26
TOTAL	3	0	3	0	0	5	23	34
%	9	0	9	0	0	15	67	100

Thirty of the 34 school leavers described in Table 17 above were studying in the NT. Education was, as in 1989, an area with a preponderance of female entrants. In total, 23 (88%) of the 26 school leavers whose chosen field of higher education was education were female. In the larger higher education groups, education was the area in which females most heavily outnumbered males, whereas engineering was the area where males most heavily outnumbered females.

Students who had completed Year 12 were asked whether they had achieved a Tertiary Entrance Score (TES) that would have allowed them entry to a tertiary institution. Sixty-nine respondents replied that they had achieved such a TES but had not entered a tertiary institution in 1991. Of this number, 38 reported being accepted for but deferring entry to a tertiary institution.

Further Education

For the purposes of this study further education was defined as an award course up to and including the level of Associate Diploma. The vast majority of school leavers who involved themselves in further education did so in the NT.

FIELD OF STUDY	CODE	FIELD OF STUDY	CODE
Applied Science/Electronics	F1	Art and Design	F2
Building	F3	Business Studies	F4
Engineering	F5	Rural and Horticulture	F6
Music	F7	Paramedical	F8
Industrial Services	F9	Personal Services/Hospitality	F10
General Studies	F11	Private Provider	F12
Child-care	F13		

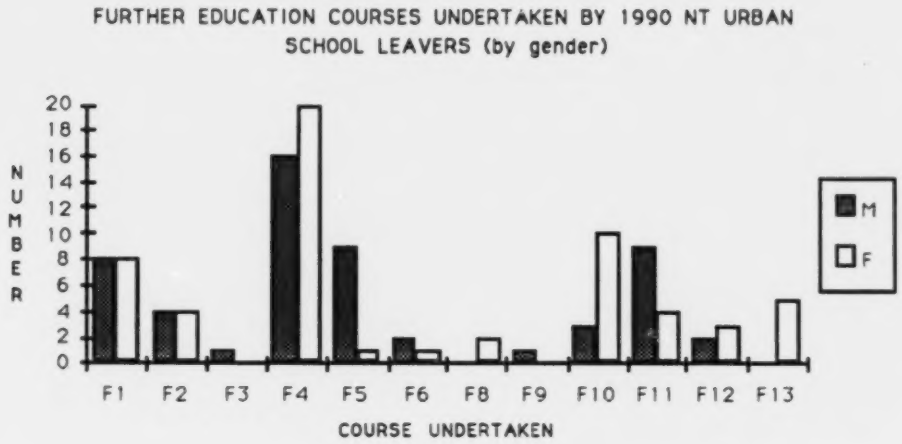
In the list of FE courses no school leavers chose to study in the field of music (F7)

TABLE 18 FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES UNDERTAKEN BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS (by gender)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13	TOT
M	8	4	1	16	9	2	0	1	3	9	2	0	55
F	8	4	0	20	1	1	2	0	10	4	3	5	58
TOT	16	8	1	36	10	3	2	1	13	13	5	5	113
%	14	7	1	32	9	3	2	1	11.5	11.5	4	4	

Female school leavers from 1989 outnumbered males by a factor exceeding two in entrances to further education courses. This was not the case with the 1990 school leavers where there was little difference. This stabilisation of numbers was also evident in the Business Studies (F4) field, which was the area of further education that attracted most school leavers.

FIGURE 9



When the numbers of 1990 school leavers who continued with higher or further education are combined, 358 school leavers continued their education. Females represented 57.8% (207) of this group, males 42.2% (151). These percentages were not consistent with the overall school leaver female–male gender breakdown of 52.2%–47.8%.

OTHERS

This category included all other destinations excluding employment and further study.

OTHER DESTINATIONS	CODE
Social such as motherhood, fatherhood, married, invalid, deceased, missing.	S
Permanently departed the NT for interstate or overseas.	I
Exchange Student - either an overseas exchange student returning home or a NT student going on an exchange.	E
NT residents going interstate to boarding school or secondary school	B

TABLE 19 OTHER DESTINATIONS OF 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS

	S	I	E	B	TOTAL
NUMBER	6	123	37	14	180
%	3	68	21	8	100

Also returned were 114 envelopes marked 'return to sender'. As previously mentioned, the figure for permanent departures, in all probability, was an underestimation. The figure for exchange students includes overseas students returning to their country of origin and NT students taking up an overseas exchange.

In the case of NT students going on exchanges, some did so at the end of their secondary schooling and others expressed their intentions of resuming secondary studies on their return to the NT.

REASONS FOR ENTERING DESTINATIONS

School leavers who entered an occupational destination or went on to further study were asked why they had entered that particular area and their response was recorded. This area of inquiry excluded those who were unemployed and those who fell into the 'Other' category. Interviewees were asked which of the following was most applicable as a reason for entering their first destination.

REASON FOR ENTERING DESTINATION	CODE
It was what I wanted to do	A
It was the only job I could get	B
I took the job to earn money whilst looking for something else	C
It was the only course I could get into. I would rather have done another course	D
Other	E

TABLE 20 REASONS GIVEN BY 1990 NT URBAN SCHOOL LEAVERS FOR ENTERING DESTINATIONS (by year level at leaving)

LEFT	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
YEAR 10	24	7	9	0	2	42
%	57	17	21	0	5	100
YEAR 11	33	13	21	0	5	72
%	46	18	29	0	7	100
DURING YEAR 12	46	2	24	1	2	75
%	61	3	32	1	3	100
END OF YEAR 12	217	19	42	11	13	302
%	72	6	14	4	4	100
TOTAL	**320**	**41**	**96**	**12**	**22**	**491**
%	**65**	**8**	**20**	**3**	**4**	**100**

No significant gender differences were apparent. The figures indicate that the stage at which the student left may have had some bearing on why he or she entered an occupational or educational destination. Students who completed Year 12 were more likely to enter a destination that they had wanted to enter and less likely to take the only job that they could get, or take a job as a stop-gap measure whilst looking for something else. Fifty-five per cent of students who did not complete Year 12 moved into a destination of

their choice, whereas 72% of those who completed Year 12 were able to enter a destination of their choice.

The pattern was similar to that of the 1989 school leavers although slightly fewer (65%) of the 1990 school leavers were able to move into an area of their choosing than the 1989 leavers (69%).

CONCLUSIONS

A feature of this report is the variation apparent in some areas from the findings of its 1989 predecessor. Whilst these variations may, in part, be attributable to differences in information-gathering techniques (as discussed in the Limitations of the Study section), they may also be reflections of national trends and the prevailing economic climate. Examples of this were more students completing Year 12 and a higher rate of unemployment amongst school leavers. When compared to the 1989 report, information gathering for this report began relatively soon after the close of the 1990 school year. As a result, the longer view afforded by the comparatively late start to the 1989 report was not available. This meant that information on job mobility and the success those completing traineeships and pre-vocational courses had in gaining employment in their chosen fields was not available.

Once again, ABS figures indicated that, from the commencement of the 1990 school year to the period in which information was gathered, a significant proportion of the NT's urban population moved interstate. When extrapolated to the school-leaver situation, this appears to indicate that the reason for many NT students leaving school was to move interstate, and to a much lesser extent, overseas.

Slightly fewer students left urban schools than in 1989. Except for the last few months of the year, when numbers of leavers steadily decreased, no real pattern emerged as to the months in which students left school.

A greater proportion of school leavers had reached the level of Year 12 than the preceding year. The NT Department of Education Statistics Section reported an increased apparent Year 12 retention rate over 1989. A greater proportion completed that year of study. An interesting deviation from 1989 was in the proportions of male and female students who left during or at the end of Year 12. Unlike 1989, when proportionally fewer female than male students left school during Year 12, and therefore proportionally more completed Year 12, in 1990 the proportions were identical. Substantially more females (614) reached Year 12 than males (480).

These figures would seem to indicate that, in general terms, more students were commencing and then completing Year 12, with males proportionally, but not numerically, matching females in regard to those who completed Year 12 or left during the year. Greater encouragement to complete Year 12 and a lesser availability of jobs may be powerful factors at work here.

When students' reasons for leaving school were analysed, leaving the NT was easily the biggest documented reason. Dissatisfaction with school was the next largest single reason. If similar categories were combined, the reason of school progress/dissatisfaction with school slightly exceeded the reason of leaving to take on an apprenticeship, traineeship, course or employment. An interesting point was that, of those who completed this section of the questionnaire, a much lower proportion (11%) left to take on an apprenticeship, traineeship or course than in 1989 (22%). It would seem to indicate that fewer opportunities

were available in these areas. This is a contention supported by the lesser numbers of 1990 school leavers actually gaining apprenticeships and traineeships than in the preceding year.

Although not quantified, during the 1989 survey, a number of respondents who had left school before completing Year 12 expressed regret at having left school 'prematurely'. This year it was decided to include a section in the questionnaire on this topic. Of those who had left prior to completing Year 12 and who completed this section, 38% expressed regret at having left school. The fact that a large proportion of those leaving before the end of Year 12 soon regretted that decision could be made known to potential school leavers to add immediacy and relevance to arguments against leaving school prematurely.

Another area of inquiry aimed at those early school leavers was whether they had any future intention of involving themselves in some form of post-compulsory education. This question revealed that 60% of this group did (at the time of interview) intend to further their education. It would seem that the majority of those not completing Year 12 did not see leaving secondary school as having been the end of their education.

Within the terms of this report, the three major destinations were Occupational, Further Study and Other. The majority of school leavers moved into the Occupational category, followed by Further Study, then Other. In ranking, this duplicated the 1989 findings, although Further Study proportionally increased in size with Occupational and Other decreasing. This may have, in part, been due to the NTU giving the researcher the titles of all courses under its control undertaken by 1990 NT Year 12 students.

Comprehensive data were available on school leavers entering apprenticeships traineeships, pre-vocational and Workstart courses. Details on all leavers joining the NT Public Service were also available. The majority (55%) of leavers surveyed moved straight into employment. The overall pattern within the Occupational category was similar to 1989 except for unemployment which increased even though this area was probably under-represented due to the nature of the data sources.

Some distinct gender differences were recorded in the Occupational category. In the Employment group, the patterns of school-leaver destinations again reflected the large private retail/service sector and large public service. Some marked gender differences were again apparent as was the case with the national scene where high numbers of females enter the clerical area and even higher numbers enter the sales area.

The figures for apprenticeships, traineeships and pre-vocational courses should be viewed with the same qualifier in mind as in the in the Occupational Destinations section of the report. Numbers of apprentices and trainees were down from the 1989 school leavers figures, but not to the degree indicated. The number of pre-vocational courses taken on by 1990 school leavers was higher than indicated. Time constraints precluded the inclusion of these late returns.

Whilst NT figures for apprenticeships and traineeships were down from the preceding year, this decline did not appear to be as large as for the rest of Australia, especially for the larger states.

Apprenticeships were the area in which the gender gap was the widest. Females were represented in only three of the nine ASCO groups and the main area of female involvement was hairdressing. Numbers of school leavers gaining apprenticeships were down 35% from the previous year. Pre-vocational courses, which are designed to lead into apprenticeships, were an area of almost total male dominance.

Traineeships were another area in which the total number of school leavers participating was down, and gender differences were quite marked. The number of school leavers entering traineeships (69) was down 38% over 1989 (111). These declines in school leaver participation in apprenticeships and traineeships may in part be a result of the national economic downturn. In 1990, female school leavers entered traineeships at a rate of almost three times that of males. The Office Clerical category largely contributed to this difference, as was the case in 1989.

Degree courses at universities were not a picture of gender equity in participation. Excepting the most popular area of Commerce, Business and Economics, the other popular areas showed stark gender differences. In both numerical and proportional terms, participation in the Commerce, Business and Economics area increased over 1989, which mirrors the national trend. Again the majority of the NT's school leavers preferred to conduct their tertiary studies in the NT. One area of tertiary education that is perhaps becoming a truer reflection of its importance to the NT's economy is the field of Hospitality Management. This is a field that fourteen of the 1990 school leavers entered which is a significant increase over the three 1989 school leavers entering this field of higher education. Of the 1023 school leavers surveyed, 24 % went on to attend higher education institutes, which was comparable to the national average.

Nationally, since the late 1980s there have been more females than males in higher education. Also in line with last year's NT findings and national trends is the dominance of females in the field of education. Females accounted for 88% of those 1990 school leavers in higher education who were studying education. This figure is consistent with the feminisation of the teaching profession in Australia.

An interesting trend in further education was the stabilisation, gender-wise, of the numbers entering this sector. This was in contrast to 1989 when female school leavers exceeded males by a factor greater than two. This stabilisation seemed to carry over to further education's largest area of Business Studies, in which females just exceeded males—unlike in 1989 when females were dominant by a factor of eight.

As may have been expected, and as was demonstrated with the 1989 leavers, those students completing Year 12 in 1990 were more likely to enter a destination of their choosing and less likely to enter a destination not of their choosing than students who left school at any other stage. Overall the 1990 school leavers were slightly less likely (65%) than their 1989 counterparts (69%) to enter a destination of their choosing.

This study provides evidence, and is a valuable reminder, that gender differences continue in many of the destinations that are theoretically available to all of the NT's school leavers. In practice, it would seem that, for whatever reason, proceeding to many destinations is still dependent on the gender of the potential entrant. Although it must be borne in mind that the one year between the 1989 and 1990 surveys is a relatively short time, any steps towards

gender equity in some destinations were more than balanced by the status quo or even reversals in others. It could be argued that the possible waste or misdirection of talent resulting from such gender differences should be cause for ongoing concern.

On the positive side, findings from the survey indicating that the NT appears to be participating in positive national trends such as greater numbers of school leavers doing so in Year 12 (and more so on completion of Year 12) and higher numbers in higher education are credits to the system.

Effects of the recession seem to be apparent in some of the survey's results such as lower numbers of apprentices and trainees and seemingly higher unemployment of school leavers. How these figures are influenced by the expected/promised climb out of recession will be of interest. With the importance of the public sector to the NT's economy, another factor will be the recommendations of the NT Government's Estimates Review Committee decisions.

APPENDIX 1

ASCO MAJOR AND MINOR GROUPS ADAPTED FOR THE 1989 SCHOOL LEAVERS SURVEY

J3 - PARA-PROFESSIONALS

* Medical and Science Technical Officers and Technicians
* Engineering and Building Associates and Technicians
* Air and Sea Transport Technical Workers
* Registered Nurses
* Police
* Miscellaneous Para-professionals

J5 - CLERKS

* Stenographers and Typists
* Data Processing and Business Machine Operators
* Numerical Clerks
* Filing, Sorting and Copying Clerks
* Material Recording and Dispatching Clerks
* Receptionists, Telephonists and Messengers
* Miscellaneous Clerks

J6 - SALESPERSONS AND PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS

* Investment, Insurance and Real Estate Salespersons
* Sales Representatives
* Sales Assistants
* Tellers, Cashiers and Ticket Salespersons
* Miscellaneous Salespersons
* Personal Service Workers

J7 - PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATORS, AND DRIVERS

* Road and Rail Transport Drivers
* Mobile Plant Operators (Except Transport)
* Stationary Plant Operators
* Machine Operators

J8 - LABOURERS AND RELATED WORKERS

* Trades Assistants and Factory Hands
* Agricultural Labourers and Related Workers
* Cleaners
* Construction and Mining Labourers
* Miscellaneous Labourers and Related Workers